

PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO THE BOARD

June 2012



Montgomery College
endless possibilities



With the academic year officially behind us, I am cherishing the opportunity for self-reflection. It is a valuable time to think about the year's successes, as well as the challenges. During the College's closing meeting, I told our faculty and staff that I am grateful for the journey we have traveled, both the ups and downs, and I wanted this report to focus on that same theme.

We celebrated major successes as a College: a new governance structure, a new Office of Compliance, a new plan to develop the Common Student Experience, and more. But what I will mark as the biggest success is the collaborative nature of so many of our initiatives this year. We came together as one College to boldly reexamine ourselves and make some tough decisions. For that, I am incredibly grateful.

But, I am also grateful for the lessons learned. I truly believe it is better to try and fall short than to never try in the first place. Personally, my biggest challenge has been to continue encouraging our College community to keep up the momentum. Change can be difficult, and there is a natural inclination to want to slow down and fall back on what feels comfortable. I hope to instill a sense of urgency for the future and a drive to keep moving forward because the results will be that much sweeter on the other end!

The College soon will release our annual Report to the Community, which will reiterate the major milestones and initiatives we achieved in fiscal year 2012. This report will focus on the successes and challenges at our campuses that may not have received as much attention. To me, these issues are just as equally important to celebrate and honor. In particular, the student stories demonstrate that, no matter the successes and the challenges, we continue to focus on our mission of empowering our students to change their lives.

Board Discussion Questions:

- As members of our board, what do you see as our College's biggest successes from this past year? What about the board's biggest accomplishments?
- What do you see as a lesson-learned moment from this past academic year, both for yourself and for the College as a whole?



Successes

- This spring students in the Visual Arts program and those taking Professional Practice for the Visual Artist from the School of Art + Design joined together for the first time to present their portfolios and transfer pieces to visiting representatives from 10 major art schools, including the Maryland Institute College of Art, the Columbus College of Art and Design of Ohio, and the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. This two-hour show has become the capstone event, but, more importantly, it signifies the growing relationship between these two programs within the newly formed [Department of Visual Arts and Design](#).
- The Renaissance Scholars Program inaugurated a [new summer study/travel experience](#). Sixteen Renaissance Scholars from the Germantown and Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campuses will travel to Kentucky and Tennessee as part of an interdisciplinary studies course that will explore the history, ecology, politics, economics, and culture of Appalachia.
- In response to an increase in the number of students who are on the autism spectrum and struggle with the development of social skills, the Takoma Park/Silver Spring Disability Support Services (DSS) counselors have developed a structured event targeting these students. DSS hosted two “socials,” which were well attended by a number a students, including those who are blind, learning disabled, or who have psychiatric disabilities. Next year, the plan is to have the social club meet once a month and to develop student leaders who will help organize the activities.
- Throughout the academic year, the College organized and participated in experiences designed to support greater understanding about the Holocaust.
 - o The Paul Peck Humanities Institute and Art Professor Ken Jassie, the coordinator of this project, organized a [Portraits of Life: Holocaust Survivors of Montgomery County](#) traveling photography exhibit and presentations by Holocaust survivors for more than 2,000 middle and high school students from Montgomery County Public Schools. The program also provided an opportunity for hundreds of students to participate via video link.
 - o Dan Rankin, MCTV producer/director, and his team worked with Professor Jassie, Holocaust survivors Nesse Godin and Manny Mandel, and three Paul Peck Humanities Institute student interns—Kristin Hoover, Martha Moreira, and Zolani Ncube—to create a [video](#) for MCTV: “Access to History: Holocaust Survivors.” The video received the prestigious [Communicators Award of Excellence](#) from the International Academy for Visual Arts.
- In addition to opening a new Science Center, the Rockville Campus also encourages learning in the science, engineering, and math (SEM) fields with a new [SEM Special Lecture Series](#). The series, which brought nationally-known speakers to campus, addressed key issues such as undergraduate research in community colleges and



innovative teaching pedagogies in SEM. The campus is developing additional SEM programs, including a “You Teach on YouTube” video contest to generate student interest in SEM and to encourage student-faculty collaborations. Funding for the project will be provided by a Montgomery College Foundation Innovation Grant.

- This semester the Rockville Campus opened its gym to all interested students during a student activity period in the PE building. While other campuses have offered similar programs, this marks the first time the Rockville Campus has provided open student access to the gym or fitness center. Embracing the One College ideal for equity in the student experience, many members of the campus worked together to align the necessary financial and human resources required to implement this endeavor.
- The College now offers six courses through Workforce Development & Continuing Education (WD&CE) Community Education and Extended Learning Services (CEELS) for Casa de Maryland. In addition, a presentation by Liliana Arango of the College’s Hispanic Business Institute and Nelida Andres of the CEELS program to Montgomery County Health and Human Services resulted in contracts for instruction in early childhood education and in food safety.
- The Nonprofit Leadership Institute (NPLI), through WD&CE, launched a reconfigured program, thanks, in part, to feedback provided by nonprofit directors through focus groups. The program now reaches mid-level directors. A College partner helped underwrite tuition, bringing the cost per participant to \$50. NPLI also partnered with Maryland Nonprofits to offer a Nonprofit Bootcamp.
- At the historic property of Falling Green, home of some of Montgomery County’s earliest settlers, students in the Human Evolution and Archaeology course had a unique opportunity to learn about the past. Participating in a community project with the Olney Boys and Girls Club, the students excavated areas near the house and [found remains](#) of farming and domestic activities dating back to 1770.
- Two members of our Graduate Transition Program (GTP) secured positions with the National Institutes of Health’s [Project Search](#), a program “dedicated to providing education and training to young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.” Meaghan Jones, a 2012 program graduate, classifies herself as a “computer whiz who types at 120 miles per hour.” Prior to enrolling in GTP, she worked at Giant. Jeremy Williams, a first-year student skilled at data entry, will balance his last year of GTP with his new work responsibilities.
- This past January, the College implemented VERBA, a software program that works in conjunction with our point-of-service provider’s database to ensure that prices of textbooks are competitive with online booksellers and other competitors. The College also greatly expanded its textbook rental program, which allows students to rent books at nearly half the cost of buying a new book. In the spring 2011 semester, students rented nearly 600 books; the number jumped to more than 2,000 rentals in spring 2012.



- To help our students with the high cost of textbooks, the bookstores sponsored a unit-wide, one-day promotion called Text-O-Rama in August 2011 and January 2012, offering a 10 percent discount on all in-store textbook purchases. Approximately 4,400 students participated in these special sale days, saving more than \$55,000 on textbook purchases. Due to these positive results, the College will offer Text-O-Rama again in August.
- The College successfully implemented the Printing at MC initiative this year, removing 39 free printers and installing 61 print kiosks across the three campuses. Print data analysis indicates that the College is on target to print fewer than two million pages in FY12, as compared to an estimated 10.7 million pages just a year ago.
- This year the [interior design \(ID\) program](#) participated in a design project sponsored by the Hyatt Regency Baltimore to create a design solution for the employee cafeteria/lounge. The College structured the project as a group design competition for students in the Commercial/Contract Design course. Hyatt is judging the designs, and the winner will see his or her concept utilized this summer as a guide for the remodel. In addition, the ID program will participate in another design competition next spring, sponsored by Made in America.
- This spring semester, seven students participated in the [Paul Peck Humanities Institute \(PPHI\) Humanities Internship Program](#) at the Library of Congress (LOC) and the Smithsonian Institution. Students Lyudmila Anderson, Ruth Bright, Samantha Cameron, Lesli Flores, Veronica Mason, Rolland Tagyen, and Ertan Tuncer had rich and rewarding experiences. One student recalled feeling a sense of awe after opening a book from Thomas Jefferson's personal library and discovering a pressed, dried flower inside. Ertan Tuncer had such a positive experience that he was asked to stay on at the LOC as paid staff to assist in the Turkish Studies section. Faculty mentors Dr. Mary Furgol, Dr. Lucy Laufe, Dr. Michelle Moran, Professor Bette Petrides, and PPHI Intern Coordinator Kelly Rudin support the internship program.

Academic Challenges

- The College's Disability Support Services (DSS) collegewide face the challenge of meeting the needs of an increasing number of students with disabilities. For example, this fall, the Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus had 315 students reporting disabilities, up by more than 100 students since 2007. In response to the demand for services, counselors reorganized their structure within the department so that there are now walk-in hours designated for DSS students only. Additionally, DSS added a part-time counselor to help meet the demand.
- Due to the passage of Maryland [House Bill 104](#), which refined the tuition waiver for students with disabilities in noncredit classes, the College experienced unintended challenges, which could have negatively impacted our Workforce Development & Continuing Education programs for developmentally/intellectually disabled students. WD&CE notified students of the change, created a scholarship fund to address the needs



of some of these students, and proactively and patiently worked with families and students. Thanks to these efforts, service levels for students were only minimally impacted.

- A major challenge on the Rockville Campus was planning the moves into the new Science Center. The College had to quickly move the Biology Department, followed by physics, engineering, and computer science, in preparation for retrofitting Science West. Faculty, staff, and deans all stepped up to help facilitate this move by staying late and coming in on weekends. Because of everyone's hard work and dedication, the College was able to teach the scheduled summer classes in the new Science Center and the science and engineering classes scheduled for this past fall. Without teamwork from faculty, staff, administrators, facilities, and IT, this would not have been possible.
- Challenges facing Auxiliary Services during this past year included remaining competitive and relevant in the ever-changing college textbook industry; increasing the percentage of student-parents served by the three Early Learning Centers; and moving forward to develop a declining balance debit card for MC students.

Student Stories

- With an undergraduate liberal arts degree in hand, Sommer Sheffield came to Montgomery College to pursue her dream of being a full-time artist. She studied in the Department of Visual Arts and Design, taking foundation courses in drawing, design, and sculpture before beginning a course of independent study with Assistant Professor Megan Van Wagoner. At the end of the fall semester, Sheffield applied to master of fine arts programs across the country. After being accepted to the School of the Arts Institute of Chicago, the Maryland Institute College of Art, and other prestigious art schools, Sommer decided to return to her home state of California. She received a full scholarship and a teaching assistantship with stipend from the University of California, San Diego. She will begin her M.F.A. studies there in the fall.
- A DSS student diagnosed with dyslexia graduated last month, despite facing challenges with reading comprehension and writing. DSS counselors encouraged him to take a lighter course load, but the student was sure he could handle a full load. He proved he was right! He completed a difficult set of courses in two years, earning all A's and two B's, while volunteering one to two days a week for 12-hour shifts at the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Station. He was accepted to the respiratory therapy program at Salisbury University at the Universities at Shady Grove.
- Originally from Nigeria, Ezenwa Dike enrolled at the College in fall 2010. During his time at MC, he says he experienced financial difficulties, which resulted in his inability to support himself and his studies. Thanks to the College's Student Employment Services, he secured a scholarship and obtained an on-campus job. Since he cannot repay the College with donations, he showed his appreciation in a different way. He has volunteered every year at the Strathmore Music Center as well as at different College events and with the MESA+ Ambassadors, a program in which volunteers provide help



for middle school students. He has been an active MESA+ participant, even presenting on behalf of the program at a local conference. He plans to transfer to Alabama State University on a full scholarship, to which he credits Job Developer Rolf Barber. Dike writes:

Right now, I am no longer worried on how to pay for my tuition at the College. I am transferring too because of Mr. Rolf's help. I am proud to say that MC made me what I am today, and the College has supported me right from the day I became a student in the College to this time I am transferring.

It was a great experience studying here and I will never regret my decision to study at Montgomery College. I believe that, on the College motto that says endless possibilities, it really is what I have seen and experienced at Montgomery College.

